

CIA CHIEF LOOKS AT USSR

by

Allen Welsh Dulles
Director of Central Intelligence

Those who direct our foreign and defense policies have a double problem. They need to know the facts and then they must decide what to do about them. In the Central Intelligence Agency it is our job to try to find out the facts and then to get the facts, and their significance, to those who are responsible for policy, namely, the President, the Secretaries of State and Defense and their advisers.

Until the Communists built a kind of Chinese Wall, which we generally call the Iron Curtain, around their domains, it was not so difficult to get a reasonable idea as to the facts in a given situation. Today a vast area of the globe -- the entire Soviet and Satellite orbit, including Communist China, is to some extent a "no man's land" of knowledge. The Communists deliberately plan it so. They want to keep us in ignorance of what they propose to do and of the means at their disposal to carry out their plans.

Meanwhile, we in the free world work out our policies with the light of publicity on what we are doing. Many of our major plans in the international field require advance approval by the Congress either in the form of ratified treaties or in the form of appropriations bills to finance our military establishment or our foreign aid programs. In our free society public debate is more or less inevitable. Certainly I would not suggest that we should change this even though it puts us at some disadvantage in dealing with an antagonist who plays the game by different rules.

Sometimes, however, in the field of technical military developments we tell the world, and hence the Communists, more than we need to. This seems to accord with our national temperament. We like to share with others the satisfaction of our own accomplishments. Personally, I should like to see us keep any potential enemies guessing about some of our technical accomplishments for here is a field where it does not pay to advertise.

One of the main tasks of the Central Intelligence Agency is to get at the facts about the Soviet orbit -- the name we generally use to cover the Communist dominated area that extends from the Elbe River in the heart of Germany to the Yellow Sea and deep into Indochina in the Far East.

I do not propose to disclose where in this quest for knowledge we are having successes. To do so would merely help the Soviet to close off existing sources of information. I can say, however, that the results of our work have led me to believe that we, in the USA, in our attitude toward the Soviet Union fall into two general categories. Some of us seem to think that the Russians are supermen who could easily carry their conquest where they will. Then at the other extreme there are those who over-discount the achievements of the Russians and consider that they have second-class brains.

The truth falls between these two extremes.

The Soviet Union has its stresses and strains like other countries and even their complete control of their press and rigid censorship cannot hide this. Also, from time to time, their problems reach such dimensions that they cannot cover them up.

For example, the Soviet leaders have admitted quite frankly the serious nature of their agricultural difficulties.

The USSR is not richly endowed with agricultural resources. The land area where both climate and soil are favorable for farming is small relative to the population, and most of it is in use. Hence, expansion of output requires intensive cultivation. The collective farm system has failed to achieve this. Their intense effort to bring Siberian waste lands under the plow may well prove to be a dismal failure and in any event will be very costly.

Also, in pursuit of industrialization, Soviet economic policy has starved agriculture of capital and drained it of labor. On the Soviet farms today a large percentage of the work is done by women. Many of the workers are old men, war cripples and children. Few boys over 16 are seen on the farms.

On the industrial side, the Soviet Union has devoted so large a share of its gross national production to military items and heavy industry that their people have been starved of consumer goods. Malenkov tried to shift the emphasis a bit and produce more consumer goods while at the same time keeping military output at substantially the same level as in the past. In this he failed and the Soviet Union seems now to be returning to the Stalinist austerity which will mean that the unhappy people of Russia will not get a break as far as their living standards are concerned.

A third great problem which faces the USSR is in the Satellite areas. Their ever changing puppet administrations in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania have proved signal failures. They have neither satisfied their own people nor made the expected contribution to the industrial, agricultural and military strength of the Soviet Bloc. Today, the Satellite peoples are more dissatisfied with their fate than when they were taken over after 1945.

These are some of the problems which the Soviet Union faces today.

On the other side of the ledger we must admit that in some areas they have made formidable progress. Those who come to the top in the ruthless power struggle that exists in the Soviet Union are persons to be reckoned with. In that "dog eat dog" system of power succession, only men of force and ability and great ruthlessness reach leadership positions.

When the Soviet State determines to tackle a particular objective, particularly in the field of military production or of scientific development, and lays down the ground rules for the work to be done, Soviet scientists and technicians have proved to be surprisingly efficient in getting results.

It is high time we should disabuse ourselves of the notion that the Soviet people are only good as chess players, as musicians, or in the ballet, apart of course from their demonstrated courage and tenacity as soldiers when defending their own country. We have now had it clearly demonstrated that they have high ability in the field of atomic energy, electronics and in aircraft design and construction. Here and in several other fields they have at times surprised the rest of the world.

In my own work, I find it far safer to assume that in such technical tasks the trained Soviet citizen can do about what we can do. And when we find certain areas in the field of science and production where we are really ahead of them, we can put that down as a happy plus -- but we do not need to tell the Russians where this is.

The disturbing thing about the Soviet effort is that their scientific and productive achievements are almost exclusively directed toward developing engines of destruction for military purposes. We, on the other hand, devote the major share of our inventiveness and of our production to improving the way of life of the ordinary human being by making better automobiles, refrigerators, television and the like. Here, the Soviet are quite prepared to let us do the pioneering with the idea that they can always copy our products and then, of course, claim the credit for the invention.

As we review Soviet achievement in the field of science and technology and note the emphasis they are placing on getting their ablest young people into scientific work, we have no real basis for complacency or for assuming an air of superiority. If we do, we are in for a sad awakening. Available statistics indicate that Soviet advanced educational institutions are now turning out more graduates in scientific fields than we are here in the United States.

Some of us may tend to get discouraged because aggressive totalitarianism has lasted so long in the Soviet Union. Pessimists tell us that under these conditions as new generations come along they have no idea of the meaning of freedom since they have never experienced it. Hence there is no incentive to seek a change.

My experience in my present work in the Central Intelligence Agency refutes any such conclusion. I have talked with many persons who have sought asylum in the West from the conditions of human slavery that exist behind the Iron Curtain. I have had contact with young people who have fled to free countries and who had never known any form of life except Communist totalitarianism. Yet somehow they still have a yearning for something better and experience a feeling of basic revolt against what they had been taught and against the manner of life they had been forced to live. Young Polish and Czech fliers who brought their planes to freedom not so long ago are good examples of this. They and many defectors from the USSR itself

have taught the Soviet and the Satellites that it is not safe to expose their peoples to the breath of freedom.

This had created a basic problem for the Soviet in handling their military, their diplomatic and their security service personnel, some of whom must come in touch with the free world to carry out their official duties.

At least here is one misconception about the Communist world of which we can all disabuse our minds: If we press forward with a vigorous defense of the principles for which this country and the free world stand, we have no need to fear that we are in a losing race against the totalitarian way of life. For just as the Russian people do not lack normal ability in science and technology, neither do they lack a normal love of freedom. And since dictatorship cannot abolish this fact, this fact will some day abolish the dictatorship.

May 13, 1955

UNCLASSIFIED		CONFIDENTIAL		SECRET	
(SENDER WILL CIRCLE CLASSIFICATION TOP AND BOTTOM)					
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY OFFICIAL ROUTING SLIP					
TO		INITIALS	DATE		
1	COL. GROGAN				
2					
3					
4					
5					
FROM		INITIALS	DATE		
1	EXEC. ASST. TO THE DCI	JSE/ekt	5/13/55		
2					
3					

☐ APPROVAL

☐ INFORMATION

☐ SIGNATURE

☐ ACTION

☐ DIRECT REPLY

☐ RETURN

☐ COMMENT

☐ PREPARATION OF REPLY

☐ DISPATCH

☐ CONCURRENCE

☐ RECOMMENDATION

☐ FILE

Remarks:

*On file 55
13 May 55*

SECRET
CONFIDENTIAL
UNCLASSIFIED

FORM NO. 30-4
1 NOV 53

Previous editions may be used.

U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE 16-68548-2

(40)